PUBLIC NOTICE

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FCC ENFORCEMENT ADVISORY

REMINDER: AMATEUR AND PERSONAL RADIO SERVICES LICENSEES AND OPERATORS MAY NOT USE RADIO EQUIPMENT TO COMMIT OR FACILITATE CRIMINAL ACTS

The Enforcement Bureau (Bureau) of the Federal Communications Commission issues this Enforcement Advisory to remind licensees in the Amateur Radio Service, as well as licensees and operators in the Personal Radio Services, that the Commission prohibits the use of radios in those services to commit or facilitate criminal acts. The Bureau recognizes that these services can be used for a wide range of permitted and socially beneficial purposes, including emergency communications and speech that is protected under the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. **Amateur and Personal Radio Services, however, may not be used to commit or facilitate crimes.**

The Bureau reminds amateur licensees that they are prohibited from transmitting "communications intended to facilitate a criminal act" or "messages encoded for the purpose of obscuring their meaning."[1] Likewise, individuals operating radios in the Personal Radio Services, a category that includes Citizens Band radios, Family Radio Service walkie-talkies, and General Mobile Radio Service, are prohibited from using those radios "in connection with any activity which is against Federal, State or local law."[2] Individuals using radios in the Amateur or Personal Radio Services in this manner may be subject to severe penalties, including significant fines, seizure of the offending equipment, and, in some cases, criminal prosecution.[3]

Media inquiries should be directed to 202-418-0500 or MediaRelations@fcc.gov.

To file a complaint with the FCC, visit https://consumercomplaints.fcc.gov or call 1-888-CALL-FCC. To report a crime, contact your local law enforcement office or the FBI.

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[1] 47 CFR § 97.113(a)(4); *see, e.g.,* FCC Enforcement Advisory, 37 FCC Rcd 2390 (EB Feb. 22, 2022).

[2] 47 CFR § 95.333(a).

[3] 47 U.S.C. §§ 401, 501, 503, 510.

To request materials in accessible formats for people with disabilities (Braille, large print, electronic files, audio format), send an e-mail to fcc504@fcc.gov or call the Consumer & Governmental Affairs Bureau at (202) 418-0530 (voice), (202) 418-0432 (TTY).

Issued by: Chief, Enforcement Bureau